



Properly Dispose of CFLs

Energy Star Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs (CFLs) use about **75 percent less energy** than standard incandescent bulbs, last up to **10 times longer**, and help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. (Source: *Energy Star*)

CFLs require a small amount of mercury to function. Mercury can be poisonous, and since it tends to accumulate in the human body, there's no acceptable level of exposure.

An intact CFL does not emit mercury. But, CFLs can be broken by accident or improper disposal. That makes it important to dispose of worn or damaged CFLs responsibly.

Don't panic if you break a CFL. Most bulbs are cold when broken and the mercury is likely to adhere to the bulb's debris. To be safe, follow the suggestions listed in the adjacent table.

Recycling is the best solution. Check with the retailer from where you purchased the bulb(s) to see if they offer a "take-back" or recycling service. Otherwise, CFLs can be thrown away with household garbage in SC, using the recommended handling methods.

Handling Broken CFLs:

- **Remove everyone from the area where cleanup will take place.**
- **Do not allow children to help. Remember to remove all pets as well.**
- **Shut the door of impacted area and leave for at least 15 minutes. Turn off ventilation system.**
- **Put on rubber or latex gloves.**
- **Scoop up fragments and powder with stiff paper or cardboard. Do not use a vacuum or broom. Wrap debris, including paper or cardboard, in a paper towel and place in a plastic bag.**
- **Clean exposed surface(s) with damp paper towels or disposable wet wipes and place in a plastic bag.**
- **Double bag all debris (plastic bags).**
- **Label the outer plastic bag(s) "MERCURY" with a permanent marker.**

This message has been brought to you by the Bureau of Air Quality (Sonya Younger) and the EQC Education and Outreach Committee. Visit the EQC Education and Outreach web site at www.scdhec.gov/eqc/outreach to access more information on DHEC's many environmental education and outreach programs.